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LORD BEACONSFIELD.

A PAPER

READ BY

T. T. HAYES, JUNR.,

BEFORE THE MEMBERS OF THE LEIGH LIBERAL
CLUB.

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“My Lord, I am on the side of the Angels.”

Speech by Mr. DISRAELI, at Oxford

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LORD BEACONSFIELD.

IN criticising the life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, and in endeavouring to place before you* the different characters which this great actor has assumed before the British public, I know I shall be met by some such answer as this—"Well, whatever you may say about Mr. Disraeli's inconsistencies, you know the same charge can be brought against your great oracle, William Ewart Gladstone; he started life as a Tory of the Tories, and to-day he may be considered a Radical among Radicals." I admit that Mr. Gladstone has withdrawn from the party with which he was connected in his youth. He has often frankly confessed that his views have undergone considerable changes upon many subjects, and it is all to his credit that he has not been ashamed to confess his change of opinion. Mr. Disraeli, on the contrary, has never admitted that his views have undergone any change, he proclaims himself to be now what he always has been, and whatever views he may be advocating, he does not scruple to declare them "part of his original policy." To-day, no doubt, as when in 1835 he was contesting Taunton as a Tory, he would say, "Gentlemen, if there be anything on which I pique myself, it is my consistency."

Another difference which is worth observing in the lives of Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone is, that whereas Mr. Disraeli has never changed his opinions except when he could benefit himself, Mr. Gladstone's changes of opinion have always been in the interest of truth and for the benefit of his country. Mr. Disraeli as a Radical, could never obtain a seat in Parliament, but on turning Tory he was returned. Mr. Gladstone was not only in Parliament, but also held office in a Tory Government before he espoused Liberal principles. Mr. Disraeli had nothing to regret and no ties to bind him to his early opinions, whilst Mr. Gladstone, in surrendering his old notions, had to brave the hostility of early associates and friends, to leave a party of which he was already a leading member, and to throw in his lot with men whom he had been taught in his early life to regard as political heretics.

It has, I think, been well said, that "You may change a man's opinions but his character never," and it may be interesting just to compare the points of contrast between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli. Both are idealists. Disraeli's idealism is unreal; the product, so to speak, of fancy without feeling. Gladstone's idealism is full of deep sympathy and massive thought. Disraeli's historic or constitutional fancies are blown like soap bubbles, brilliant,

NOTE.—At the request of the Members of the Leigh Liberal Club, I have consented to publish this Paper. Although somewhat hastily written, I trust it may serve its purpose in proving that the honour and interests of this country, are not safe in the hands of the present Premier. I am indebted to a recent work, published by S. O. Beeton, 39, Bedford-street, Covent Garden, for many of the incidents in the early life of Benjamin Disraeli; and to all those who are desirous of being acquainted with Mr. Disraeli's early history, I heartily recommend this volume.

empty, and evanescent. Gladstone's conceptions come from a heart full of love, and a mind full of power. Any flattery, any art, by which he may win a vote, is natural to our present Premier. The very voice of Mr. Gladstone has the ring of deep conviction, and it is in telling arguments, not in pointed sarcasm, that the strength of his speeches is to be found.

It will be found, if we carefully examine the life of Benjamin Disraeli, that his guiding star has been his own ambition, and that self has been the only deity he has worshipped. My purpose here will be suited, if I call your attention to two extracts from the first Novel he wrote, namely, *Vivian Grey*. This work was written when he was a young man, and is supposed to be an autobiography of himself, and it will be seen that he has followed the ideas which Vivian Grey sketched for himself. Communing with himself as to how "he could obtain his magnificent ends," Vivian Grey thus speaks: "The Bar, pooh! law and bad jokes till we are 40, and then with the most brilliant success, the prospect of gout and a coronet. Besides, to succeed as an advocate, I must be a great lawyer, and to be a great lawyer, I must give up my chance of being a great man. The services in war time are fit only for desperadoes (and that truly am I), but in peace, are fit only for fools. The Church is more rational. Let me see, I should certainly like to act Wolsey, but the thousand and one chances are against me. And truly I feel my destiny should not be on a chance. Were I the son of a Millionaire, or a Noble, I might have all. Curse on my lot that the want of a few rascal counters, and the possession of a little rascal blood should mar my fortune."

Further on in the same work, "still harping on" the means of advancement, he says, "Yes, we must mix with the herd, we must humour their weaknesses, we must sympathise with the sorrows that we do not feel, and share the merriment of fools. Oh, yes! to rule men we must be men, to prove that we are strong we must be weak, to prove that we are giants we must be dwarfs, even as the Eastern Genie was hid in the charmed bottle. Our wisdom must be concealed under folly and our constancy under caprice. Even in the same spirit would I explain Jove's terrestrial visitings, for to govern men, even the god appeared to feel as a man, and sometimes as a beast,—was apparently influenced by their vilest passions. *Mankind, then, is my great game.* A smile for a friend, and a sneer for the world, is the way to govern mankind, and such was the motto of Vivian Grey." Let us look at a scene which is described in this Novel. Vivian Grey is brought into contact with a 'Magnifico,' the Marquis of Carabas, and of course he must ingratiate himself into the Marquis's favour. After dinner, a political discussion takes place, in which the Marquis talks a great deal of nonsense, and is completely refuted by his opponents, when a voice proceeded from the end of the table from a young man who had hitherto preserved a profound silence, "In my opinion," said Mr.

Vivian Grey, "his Lordship has been misunderstood." The eyes of the Marquis sparkled, and the mouth of the Marquis was closed. "Mr. Vivian Grey proceeded with the utmost *sang froid*; he commented upon expressions, split and subtilised words, insinuated opinions, and finally quoted a whole passage of Bolingbroke to prove that the opinion of the most noble the Marquis of Carabas was one of the soundest, wisest, and most convincing of opinions that was ever promulgated by mortal man." The quotation from Bolingbroke was invented by the defender of the Marquis, for it was "a rule with Vivian Grey, never to advance any opinion as his own. It was therefore his system always to advance an opinion as that of some eminent and considered personage."

Does not this description of "Vivian Grey" bear an excellent resemblance to the Earl of Beaconsfield of to-day? How we see the ideas of Mr. Disraeli as a young man reflected in the character of Lord Beaconsfield? I wish you, therefore, as we look into the life of this remarkable man, to bear in mind the leading ideas conveyed in the passages I have just quoted, and you will see what an excellent guide they are to the principles which have governed Mr. Disraeli's political life.

To begin at the beginning, I may state that of Mr. Disraeli's parentage, we know that his grandfather came to England in 1748, from Venice: prior to this the family originally, with other Hebrew families, were driven from Spain. In Venice, they took the name of Disraeli, to show their descent from the stock of Israel, a name never before adopted by any other family. Isaac Disraeli, the father of the present Earl of Beaconsfield married, in the year 1802, Maria, sister of Joshua Basevi, by whom he had four children, the second of whom he named Benjamin. Isaac Disraeli was a member of the Jewish faith, and he for some time held the office of warden in the synagogue, but when Benjamin Disraeli was about 13 years old, his father left the Jewish faith. The exact date of Benjamin Disraeli's birth cannot be ascertained, by some it is said to have occurred in 1803, and others say 1804, and it is equally uncertain where he was born, whether in Hackney or Bloomsbury Square. As young Benjamin was thirteen years old before his father espoused Christianity, he had undergone the Jewish initiatory rite, viz: circumcision, which was performed upon him by David Aborbenal Lindo. The initiatory Christian rite, viz: baptism, we find from an extract from the Parish Registry of St. Andrew's, Holborn, was performed upon him on July 31st, 1817, and he was no doubt then made as much of a Christian as he ever became. How he came to be baptised, is supposed to be through the act of the poet Rogers, who was a great friend of his father's, and being anxious that his religion should not be a bar to his success in life, one day took him off to the nearest Church, where the ceremony was performed. Young Disraeli received his early education at a private school in Winchester, not in the great school there; he was also placed under

a Unitarian minister. Many people suppose the present Premier of England to have risen entirely from the ranks, and to have pushed his way upwards by his own exertion. This view is entirely incorrect. Mr. Disraeli from the first was in Society, he had the highest culture of the day to surround him, and had easy access to rich and influential people. In his early days he was a frequent guest at the table of the Countess of Blessington, with whom the celebrated Count D'Orsay, the leader of London fashion, used to live. The Company he met there was of a strange character, and included the late Louis Napoleon and M. de Morny, Theodore Hook, Horace Smith, and Rogers the Poet: so it will easily be seen that he had every advantage as regards his social position. As regards his personal appearance at this time, he is thus described: "Young Disraeli was exceedingly handsome, he was also an egregious dandy, foppery to an extreme of extravagance was the mode with lads 30 years ago, but he outstripped all his competitors in personal adornment, his ringlets of silken black hair, his flashing eyes, his effeminate air, and lisping voice, his dress coat of black velvet lined with white satin, his white kid gloves, with wrist surmounted by a long hanging fringe of black silk, and his ivory cane, of which the handle, inlaid with gold, was relieved by more black silk in the shape of a tassel." Such is the description of the present Premier when a young man, and the story of his life will be found remarkable enough without people trying to make out that his origin was very humble; on the contrary, we find it was such that he had every advantage of rising to future fame.

Let us now come to his first appearance as a politician. In June, 1832, before the passing of the Reform Bill, he stood in the extreme Radical interest for the borough of High Wycombe. This borough was a very small one, being only 128 acres in extent, yet it nevertheless sent two members to Parliament, who were elected solely by the Corporation and burgesses. It was an old Whig borough, and both its late representatives were supporters of Earl Grey. Mr. Disraeli therefore appealed to the Radicals for support, at the same time trying to induce what Tories he could to support him out of spite to the Whigs. He published and placarded the borough with letters in his support from the most advanced Radicals of the day, including Daniel O'Connell and Joseph Hume, who strongly urged his claims upon the Radicals of the constituency. O'Connell's letter contained these words: "His (Mr. Disraeli's) readiness to carry the Reform Bill into practical effect towards the production of cheap government and free institutions is enhanced by the talent and information which he brings to the good cause. I should certainly express full reliance on his political and personal integrity." Joseph Hume wrote: "I hope the Reformers will rally round you, who entertain Liberal opinions in every branch of government, and are prepared to pledge yourself to support reform and economy in every department." Mr. Disraeli, we are told, made

his entry into Wycombe in an open carriage drawn by four horses, and kissed his hand to all the females who were at the windows, also bowing profoundly to his friends. In his address to the electors he said, "Reform was a great means to a great end. He expected to derive from it ecclesiastic, financial, and legal reform. Those were the measures he would promote and pursue. He would also seek the amelioration of the condition of the poor, without such amelioration the country could not exist. His principle was, that the happiness of the many must be preferred to the happiness of the few, and he did not think it necessary, not belonging to the tail of a faction, but sprung from the people, and having none of the blood of the Plantagenets or Tudors in his veins, to be more specific. No sneer should stop his tongue while it could express the honest ideas of a clear head." From the letters from Hume and O'Connell, and from Mr. Disraeli's address, it will be seen how very radical he made himself appear. He claimed the patronage of the most advanced men of the day, and his speech certainly showed no signs of aristocratic leanings, but the electors would not have him, and the votes at the close of the Poll were:—

Grey	(Whig )	...	...	23
Disraeli	(Radical )	...	...	12

Nothing daunted, however, Mr. Disraeli promised as soon as the Reform Bill was passed, to contest the borough again, and on the 5th of October in the same year, he again issued his address to the electors of Wycombe. (It must be stated that, owing to the passing of the Reform Bill, the constituency was now considerably increased.) In this address Mr. Disraeli advocates Radical doctrines, and we find such expressions as the following:—"Gentlemen, I come forward to oppose this disgusting system of factions and intrusive nomination, which, if successful, must be fatal to your local independence, and which, if exclusively acted upon throughout the country, may even be destructive of your general liberties." "I am desirous of recurring to those old English triennial parliaments of which the Whigs originally deprived us; and by repealing the taxes upon knowledge, I would throw the education of the people into the hands of the philosophic student instead of the ignorant adventurer." "Although I shall feel it my duty to enforce, on all opportunities, the most rigid economy, and the most severe retrenchment, to destroy every useless place and every undeserving office, and to effect the greatest reduction of taxation consistent with the maintenance of public faith and the real efficiency of the Government, I shall withhold my support from every Ministry which will not originate some great measure to ameliorate the condition of the lower orders, to rouse the dormant energies of the country, to liberate our shackled industry, and reinstate our expiring credit." He thus concluded his address: "Ireland in rebellion, the colonies in convulsion, our foreign relations in a state of such 'inextricable confusion, that we are told that war alone can sever the Gordian knot of complicated blunders;

the farmer in doubt, the shipowners in despair, our merchants without trade, and our manufacturers without markets, the revenue declining, and the army increased, the wealthy hoarding their useless capital, and pauperism prostrate in our once contented cottages. Englishmen! behold the unparalleled Empire raised by the heroic energies of your fathers; rouse yourselves in the hour of doubt and danger, rid yourselves of all that political jargon and factious slang of Whig and Tory—two names with one meaning, used only to delude you, and unite in forming a great National Party, which can alone save the country from impending destruction. I have the honour to be, your obliged and obdt. Servt,—B. DISRAELI.” This address is radical enough, and 45 years ago it must have been considered very revolutionary. The election took place on the 11th and 12th of December, and the result of the Polling was as follows :

Smith	(W)	...	...	...	179
Grey	(W)	...	...	...	140
Disraeli	(R)	...	...	...	119

So Mr. Disraeli was again defeated, and by 21 votes. We next find him seeking entrance into Parliament during the following year. for the borough of Marylebone, and he again appeared upon the Radical platform advocating vote by ballot, triennial parliaments, repeal of the paper duty, and repeal of the assessed taxes. I need not give you any extracts from his address, as I am sure none of you are in doubt about the Radicalism of Mr. Disraeli's politics at this time. His views must have shocked the sensibilities of timid Liberals as well as the old Tories, as the strength of his Radicalism was only exceeded by the boldness of his language. Let us now drop the curtain, and leave the Radical Benjamin Disraeli at the end of the year 1833. It will have been noticed that all his attempts to obtain a seat in Parliament as a Radical were fruitless, and as there was every appearance now that Toryism was gradually becoming popular, Mr. Disraeli seems to have made up his mind to try his luck as a Tory candidate. The farmers were now becoming very uneasy, and even the Tories of that day could not satisfy their demands. Mr. Disraeli, with considerable skill, and in order to bring himself into prominence, got himself and two others appointed a Committee to draw up a petition setting forth the grievances of the farmers, and the Duke of Buckingham, a Tory of the Tories, presided at a large gathering of Agriculturalists to warn Ministers against the evil which the Agriculturalists said the Government had inflicted upon them. Mr. Disraeli spoke at this meeting, and made the following remarks: “No nation could ever do without agriculture and the peasantry attached to it, and as for the manufacturers of Birmingham and Manchester, they would, if it suited them at any time, migrate to Belgium, France, or Egypt. The agriculturalists had a spirit of patriotism. They had on their side wealth and intelligence, and all the aristocracy of the country” These sentiments are in striking contrast with the opinions expressed the year before, at Marylebone, when he was advocating that “industry should be relieved from the

encumbrances which property was more capacitated to endure," but Mr. Disraeli is now trying to curry favour with the Duke of Buckingham and the Agriculturalists, in order to get into Parliament. Mr. Disraeli again stands as a candidate for Wycombe, but not on the same lines as the Disraeli of 1832 and 1833. The *London Examiner*, alluding to this. Mr. Disraeli's third appearance at Wycombe, remarks, "It had one good effect, it has shown the Tory in disguise out in his true colours. At the last election, he set a trap for a few of the Cobbettites, and baited it with triennial parliaments and vote by ballot. He has now carefully avoided touching upon his former advocacy of these measures, which has much discomfited his Radical friends." Notwithstanding that Mr. Disraeli was at this election supported by Tory money, Tory tyranny, and Tory votes, he was again unsuccessful. The polling was as follows:

Smith	(W)	...	...	...	288
Grey	(W)	...	...	...	147
Disraeli	(T)	...	...	...	128

This election he lost by 19 votes.

In 1834 we find him as a Tory candidate opposing the return of Mr. Labouchere at Taunton. In one of Disraeli's speeches to the electors he attacks Daniel O'Connell, whose influence, be it remembered, only two years before, he had sought to assist his return for Wycombe. He charged the Whigs with having seized the bloody hand of O'Connell, and he concludes his address with this remark, "Gentlemen, if there be anything on which I pique myself, it is my consistency. I have ever been, and am, a supporter of the Church of England, because I believe it to be the great bulwark of civil and religious liberty, because I consider the leaders of the Church have been the leaders of the people in a great crisis of our country, and these very bishops have saved the constitution and the realm." In 1832, Mr. Disraeli had styled the Tories "a shattered, disabled, and disheartened fragment," but in 1834, the gentleman who can pique himself on his consistency appears as a Tory candidate; however, he is again unlucky, and when the poll closed the result was,

Labouchere	(L)	...	...	...	884
Disraeli	(T)	...	...	...	544

And now we come to the public castigation which he received from O'Connell, the severest rebuke and exposure that perhaps has ever fallen to the lot of a public man. It will be remembered that Mr. Disraeli had used O'Connell's name and influence when he contested Wycombe as a Radical, but at Taunton he could throw him overboard, and call him an incendiary. O'Connell made a great speech in Dublin, and, referring to Mr. Disraeli's abuse of him, said: "I must confess there is one of the late attacks on me which excited in my mind a great deal of astonishment. It is this—the attack lately made at Taunton by Mr. Disraeli. In the annals of political turpitude, there is not anything deserving the appellation of black-guardism to equal that attack upon me. What is my acquaintance with this man? Just this. In 1831, or the beginning of 1832, the

borough of Wycombe became vacant. I then knew him, but not personally. I knew him merely as the author of one or two novels. He got an introduction to me and wrote me a letter, stating that I was a Radical Reformer, and that he was also a Radical, and was going to stand upon the Radical interest for the borough of Wycombe, where he said there were many persons of that way of thinking who would be influenced by my opinion; he would feel obliged by receiving a letter from me, recommendatory of him as a Radical. His letter to me was so distinct upon the subject, that I immediately complied with the request, and composed as good an epistle as I could in his behalf.

At Taunton the miscreant had the audacity to style me an incendiary; why, I was as great an incendiary in 1831 as I am at present, if I ever were one, and if I am, he is doubly so for having employed me. Then he calls me a traitor. My answer to that is, he is a liar. He is a liar in action and in words. His life is a living lie. He is a disgrace to his species. What state of society must that be that could tolerate such a creature—having the audacity to come forward with one set of principles at one time, and obtain political assistance by reason of those principles, and at another to profess diametrically the reverse? His life, I say again, is a living lie. He is the most degraded of his species and kind, and England is degraded in tolerating, or having upon the face of her society, a miscreant of this abominable, foul, and atrocious nature. My language is harsh, and I owe an apology for it, but I will tell you why I owe that apology. It is for this reason, that if there be harsher terms in the British language, I should use them, because it is the harshest of all terms that would be descriptive of a wretch of his species. He is just the fellow for the Conservative Club. I suppose if Sir Robert Peel had been out of the way when he was called upon to take office, this fellow would have undertaken to supply his place. He has falsehood enough, depravity enough, and selfishness enough to become the fitting leader of the Conservatives. He is Conservatism personified. His name shows he is by descent a Jew. His father became a convert. He is the better for that in this world, and I hope, of course, he will be the better for it in the next.

It will not be supposed that when I speak of Disraeli as the descendant of a Jew, that I mean to tarnish him on that account. They were once the chosen people of God. There were miscreants among them, however, and it must have certainly been from one of these that Disraeli was descended. He possesses just the qualities of the impenitent thief who died upon the Cross, whose name I verily believe must have been Disraeli. For ought I know, the present Disraeli is descended from him, and with the impression that he is, I now forgive the heir-at-law of the blasphemous thief who died upon the Cross."

After this dressing down, Mr. Disraeli's fury became so great that he seemed bereft of sense, and he challenged O'Connell's eldest

son to fight him a duel. Daniel O'Connell, Mr. Disraeli was aware, would not fight, so he demanded satisfaction at the hands of the son. O'Connell's son, however, declined to have anything to do with him, whereupon Mr. Disraeli wrote young O'Connell a letter which concluded thus:—"I shall take every opportunity of holding your father's name up to public contempt, and I fervently pray that you or some one of his blood may attempt to avenge the unextinguishable hatred with which I shall pursue his existence." In a letter addressed to Daniel O'Connell, Mr. Disraeli thus concludes,—“I will seize the first opportunity of inflicting upon you a castigation which will make you at the same time remember the insults you have lavished upon Benjamin Disraeli.” What the country thought of Mr. Disraeli at this time may be gathered from some verses which appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* on May 8th, 1835.

This is an author the first of our day,
 Who wrote the great Novel of "Vivian Grey,"
 And another grand and instructive book,
 "How to dine and drink and dress like a Duke,"
 Also an Epick, whose sale's at zero,
 And of these he is himself the hero ;
 Though the fates won't let him just now be glorious,
 He at least contrives to be ever notorious,
 Sometimes stealing the hearts of the blues
 In velvet trousers and crimson shoes,
 With jewels and chains, and rings from Ransom,
 And a face oh ! was anything ever so handsome ;
 Sometimes deigning to teach mankind,
 Such times require one master mind
 To control the world—'mid the whirl and whiz
 Of jarring systems,—such mind being his.
 At Taunton a zealot for Lords and Throne,
 A republican stout in Mary-le-bone,
 Spouting alternately Archer and Scrubb,
 For my lady and the Carlton Club,
 But lo ! at a few withering epithets sore,
 And to live in the newspapers one day more,
 This is the man
 Who has challenged the man
 Who challenged the man
 Who challenged the great Agitator.

Leaving the O'Connell episode, we now come to the Maidstone Election. In 1837, Mr. Disraeli stood along with Mr. Wyndham Lewis, in the Conservative interest for this borough. Mr. Lewis was a man of great wealth, and his last election for Maidstone, in 1835, had cost him £6,000, or at the rate of £12 per head for every vote he polled. Mr. Lewis though a very rich, was a very dull man, and it was thought advisable that a brilliant and flippant colleague, like Mr. Disraeli, should run with him. In Mr. Disraeli's address to the electors, he said: "I solicit your suffrages as an uncompromising adherent to that ancient constitution, which once was the boast of our fathers, and is still the blessing of their children. I wish to see the Crown enjoy its prerogative, and both Houses of Parliament their equal privileges." "Convinced that the Reformed Religion, as by law established in this country, is at the same time the best guarantee for religious toleration and orthodox purity, I feel it my duty to uphold the rights of the National Church—that illustrious institution, to which we are not less indebted for our civil,

than for our spiritual liberties." Here we have Mr. Disraeli announcing himself as the champion of "Orthodox purity." "Orthodox purity and Benjamin Disraeli!" How sublime—like Gratiano in the play, one can say, "I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word." The Conservative candidates (Messrs. Lewis and Disraeli) were opposed in the Liberal interest, by Col. Perronet Thompson, a name which will ever be associated with those of Cobden and Bright, in obtaining the Repeal of the Corn Laws. Col. Thompson advocated, "shortening the duration of Parliaments," and "vote by ballot," in fact, the exact programme which Mr. Disraeli supported when contesting Wycombe. Yet now, Mr. Disraeli stands before the electors of Maidstone, to oppose the man who professed all the articles of the creed he had advocated three years before. But this is not all. On the hustings at Maidstone, with that characteristic impudence and lying which have so distinguished Mr. Disraeli's career, he utters the following mendacious sentence, "Here I am, gentlemen, filling the same place, preaching the same doctrine, supporting the same institutions as I did at Wycombe." A more barefaced lie was never uttered in public before. This, too, be it remembered, was said by one who had proclaimed himself the champion of orthodox purity, but the electors of Maidstone were satisfied with Mr. Disraeli, and he was elected—the voting being,

Lewis	(T)	...	...	...	782
Disraeli	(T)	...	...	...	668
Thompson	(L)	...	...	...	529

Mr. Disraeli, therefore, was first returned to Parliament in the year 1837, in the Tory interest, for the borough of Maidstone. Writing on this election, the Liberal paper said, "The blight of dishonour has again fallen on Maidstone. Withering as was the curse which the return of Wyndham Lewis brought upon her name, in this depth of moral infamy they have found a lower deep in the return of a man who is without character and without honour, in opposition to one of the most talented, tied, and honourable statesmen in the kingdom."

Mr. Disraeli being now in Parliament, he seized the first opportunity of measuring swords with O'Connell. It will be remembered, that two years before, he had written to O'Connell, saying, that he would castigate him when once he was in Parliament. The speech was a miserable failure. It was in Mr. Disraeli's most grandiloquent vein, every sentence created "roars of laughter," and he concluded with these words, "I am not surprised, sir, at the reception I have received. I have begun several times many things, and I have often succeeded at last. Aye, sir! and though I sit down now, the time will come when you will hear me." The general opinion of the House of Commons seems to have been, that they had been listening to a conceited charlatan, whose personal appearance was thus described by an eye-witness: "Mr. Disraeli was very showily attired, being dressed in a bottle-green frock-coat, and a waistcoat of of white, of the Dick Swiveller pattern, the front of which exhibited

a network of glittering chains; large fancy-pattern pantaloons, and a black tie, above which, no shirt collar was visible, completed the outward man." Nothing daunted by the failure of his first attempt to address the House of Commons, we find Mr. Disraeli, seven days after, making another attempt and with better success. He now gradually feels his way, and tries in every possible manner to attract the attention of Sir Robert Peel, the leader of the Tory party. Mr. Disraeli being anxious that Sir Robert Peel should put him in office, he therefore never misses an opportunity of eulogizing Sir Robert Peel. On one occasion, Mr. Disraeli addresses the house in this style: "He (*i.e.* Sir Robert Peel) never employed his influence for factious purposes, and had never been stimulated into his exertions by a disordered desire of obtaining office: above all, he had never carried himself to the opposite benches, by making propositions by which he was not ready to abide. Whether in, or out of office, the Right Honourable Baronet had done his best to make the settlement of the new constitution of England work for the benefit of the present time and of posterity." Shortly after, there is an appeal to the country, and Mr. Disraeli goes about preaching the doctrines of Conservatism, and applauding the genius and statesmanship of Sir Robert Peel. About this time, Mr. Disraeli's colleague, Mr. Wyndham Lewis, dies, and in a few months after, Mr. Disraeli marries his widow. She was 15 years older than he was, but she brought him a very handsome fortune.

We now find Mr. Disraeli offering himself as a Conservative candidate for Shrewsbury, although it might have been expected that he would have again come forward for Maidstone. The reason alleged for this change, and as we shall afterwards see to be a very likely one, was, that he had not paid his last election bills at Maidstone. In his first speech to the Shrewsbury electors, he said "he hoped to be returned with his colleague, as their representatives, and that he was quite as consistent as he had ever been." He then proceeded to astound his Tory hearers with "the immense sacrifice he had made for their sakes, namely, that he was born at High Wycombe, a borough the property of his father, and that he had been defeated there by only fifteen votes, at the time of the Reform mania. Such a favourite was he there, that, only a week ago, all parties in the borough—Tory, Whig, and Radical—had not only offered to place him at the head of the poll, but also to return any member he might name." Was ever such conceit exhibited to the public? It is only excelled by the abominable lies of the speaker. In the first place, Mr. Disraeli was born in London, not at High Wycombe. In the second place, his father did not own the borough. And in the third place, he stood for Wycombe three times, not once, as he leaves us to infer, and, moreover, he never was defeated by 15 votes. There are here some three or four deliberate untruths, in his first address to his new constituents. We now must notice a most remarkable charge which

was brought against Mr. Disraeli when he stood for Shrewsbury. A list of judgments for debts which had been pronounced against him was published throughout the borough. Mr. Disraeli denied the whole statement as a gross fabrication, whereupon, a Mr. Yardley, a solicitor, wrote to the Court of Queen's Bench for a list of the judgments, and received the following answer:—"GRAY'S INN, June 25, 1841.—SIR,—In reply to your communication requesting to be informed what judgments appear to be unsatisfied in the Superior Courts of Westminster against Benjamin Disraeli, I beg to send you Office Copy Extracts of those judgments which are recorded against him in the Courts of Queen's Bench and Exchequer, and copies of the extracts of four judgments against the same person in the Common Pleas.—There are also several annuities enrolled against Mr. D'Israeli.—I am, Sir, Your most obedient servant,—A. WARROND."—W. YARDLEY, Esq.

IN THE EXCHEQUER PLEAS.

Herts.—D'Israeli Benjamin, Esq., havg. priv. of Parliament, ats. John Williams Edwards per ord. B. Parke, proms. Dams., £200, costs, £15 13s.

Easter Term, 1839.

LONSDALE.

Middlesex.—Disraeli Benjamin, Esq., havg. priv. of Parliament, ats. Charles Lewis per ord. B. Maule, proms. Dams. £308 0s. 6d.

Easter Term, 1840.

PLAINTIFF IN PERSON.

Middlesex.—James Whitecombe, agt. Benjamin Disraeli proms. per. ord. B. Parke, Dams., £760 1s. Costs, £23 9s. 0d.

WHITCOMBE.

Herts.—Henry Harris, agt. Benjamin Disraeli per ord. Lord Abinger proms. Dams., £200.

I certify the above to be true extracts.
Exchequer Office of Pleas, 24 June, 1841.

C. LEWIS.

WILLIAM WELLER.

JUDGMENTS FROM 1838 TO 1841, COMMON PLEAS.

			£	s.	d.	No.
Aug. 9th, 1838—At the suit of Beal	...	...	19	7	0	445
" March 19th, 1841 "	"	Sawyer	...	...	...	460
" 23rd " "	"	Low	754	18	0	
" 23rd " "	"	Weston	276	13	6	335

IN THE QUEEN'S BENCH.

Middlesex.—Chas. Waller v. Benjamin Disraeli, for £7,000 and £3 10s. Roll 1914.

I certify that judgment was signed in the above case, in Trinity Term, 1838.
24 June, 1841.

THOMAS BARLOW.

Clerk of the Judgments.

Middlesex.—Maria Ann Marsh spr. extrx. and ors. v. Benjamin Disrael £5003 5s. 0d. Roll 1468.

I certify that judgment was signed in the above case, in Michaelmas Term, 1840.
24 June, 1841.

THOMAS BARLOW.

Clerk of the Judgments.

Middlesex.—Maria Ann Marsh, spr. extrx. and ors. v. Benjamin Disraeli for £2,300 and costs. Roll 1466.

I certify that judgment was signed in the above case, in Michaelmas Term, 1840.
24 June, 1840.

THOMAS BARLOW.

Clerk of the Judgments.

Middlesex.—Thomas Ward v. Benjamin Disraeli for £3,000 and £3 10s. 0d. Roll 1913.

I certify that judgment was signed in the above case, in Michaelmas Term, 1838.
24 June, 1841.

THOMAS BARLOW,

Clerk of the Judgments.

Middlesex.—John Parton Ruggett v. Benjamin Disraeli for £20 and £29 2s. 6d.

I certify that judgment was signed in the above case in Michaelmas Term, 1838.
24 June, 1841.

THOMAS BARLOW,

Clerk of the Judgments.

Middlesex.—Rd. Kirkman Lane v. Benjamin Disraeli for £500. Roll 1056.

I certify that judgment was signed in the above case, in Michaelmas Term, 1840.
24 June, 1841.

THOMAS BARLOW,

Clerk of the Judgments.

Middlesex.—Kensington Lewis v. Benjamin Disraeli for £158 and £3. Roll 1056.

I certify that judgment was signed in the above case, in Trinity Term, 1838.
24 June, 1841.

THOMAS BARLOW,

Clerk of the Judgments.

Sur. Wiltshire.—Sir Benjamin Smith v. Benjamin Disraeli for £505 16s. 11d. Roll 4815.

I certify that judgment was signed in the above case, in Trinity Term, 1840.
24 June, 1841.

THOMAS BARLOW, Clerk of the Judgments.

Mr. Yardley, in another letter, challenges Mr. Disraeli to disprove these statements, and asks him to appoint some one to go up to London along with him (Mr. Yardley), to search the rolls and to certify as to the correctness or otherwise of these charges. Mr. Disraeli very wisely declines this request. Notwithstanding this exposure, Mr. Disraeli is returned for Shrewsbury.

I pass on to notice the relationship between Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Disraeli. Sir Robert Peel's faith in Free Trade was now beginning to exhibit itself, and Mr. Disraeli, still expecting promotion from Sir Robert, always supported him. Speaking on one occasion, Mr. Disraeli said, "he did not think that the honourable gentlemen opposite had succeeded in making out their claim to being peculiarly the originators of the principles of Free Trade." Mr. Disraeli then went on to show that the idea of Free Trade originated with the Tories, and said, "the conduct pursued by the Right Honourable Baronet (Sir R. Peel), was in exact harmony—in perfect consistency with the principles in reference to Free Trade laid down by Mr. Pitt." I could quote speech after speech of Mr. Disraeli's, where he showers the most fulsome adulation upon Peel, and where he strongly supports his Free Trade policy, but all to no purpose. Sir Robert Peel can see through him, and therefore treats with the utmost contempt the praises thus bestowed upon him by his fervent supporter. At last Mr. Disraeli, finding it hopeless to expect anything from Sir Robert Peel, changes his tactics and puts himself forward by degrees as one of the leaders of the Protectionist party, and in speech after speech he gradually becomes more abusive in his attacks upon his former idol. I must ask your attention to a few extracts from his speeches, showing how completely he turned round, and for his former fulsome adulation we find substituted the grossest personalities directed

against Sir Robert Peel. Mr. Disraeli, in one of his speeches, says: "The Right Hon. Gentleman (Sir Robert Peel) caught the Whigs bathing and walked away with their clothes. He has left them in the full enjoyment of their liberal position, and he is himself a strict conservative of their garments. I look on the Right Hon. Gentleman as a man who has tamed the shrew of Liberalism by her own tactics. He is the political Petruchio who has outbid you all." Again, and be it remembered, Mr. Disraeli only a short time before had been boasting that Free Trade had originated with the Conservatives, he comes out with the following speech: "For my part, if we are to have Free Trade, I, who honour genius, prefer that such measures should be proposed by the hon. member for Stockport (Mr. Cobden), than by one who through skilful parliamentary measures has tampered with the generous confidence of a great party. For myself I care not what may be the result. Dissolve, if you please, the Parliament you have betrayed, and appeal to the people, who, I believe, mistrust you. For me there remains this at least—the opportunity of expressing thus publicly my belief that a Conservative Government is an organised hypocrisy." Only a very short time before, as we have noticed, Mr. Disraeli had said, "The conduct pursued by the Right Honourable Baronet was in exact, permanent, and perfect consistency with the principles of Free Trade laid down by Mr. Pitt." But then Mr. Disraeli was trying to curry favour with Sir Robert Peel, with a view to obtaining office. Sir Robert Peel becomes more and more convinced that the Repeal of the Corn Laws is necessary, and Mr. Disraeli continues to attack him with increasing virulence. On one occasion, when addressing the House of Commons, Mr. Disraeli exclaims, "Let men stand by the principles by which they rise—right or wrong—I make no exception. If they be in the wrong they must retire to that shade of private life with which our present rulers have so often threatened us. Do not, then, because you see a great personage giving up his opinions—do not cheer him on—do not yield so ready a reward to 'political tergiversation.'" What unblushing hypocrisy is all this! Here we have Mr. Disraeli, at one time a Radical, at another a Tory, at one time a supporter of the Ballot, at another an opponent, advocating triennial parliaments and opposing them, condemning the Irish Church and then its chief defender, asking the aid of O'Connell and Joseph Hume one day, and immediately after denouncing both with the utmost vehemence. I ask, is Benjamin Disraeli the right man to accuse a great statesman of "political tergiversation" when he honestly confesses his change of opinion, and is striving to give the people cheap bread? The attacks of Mr. Disraeli on Sir Robert Peel answered their purpose, and caused him to be looked upon in the House of Commons, after the death of Lord George Bentinck, as the leader of the Protectionist Party. Mr. Disraeli played for high stakes with dirty weapons, but he gained his end.

Having dealt with the position Mr. Disraeli assumed in refer-

ence to the passing of the Repeal of the Corn Laws, let us look at another question, where we find Mr. Disraeli throwing over all the vital principles of his party, and abandoning every position that Toryism held dear, and rejoicing that he had given to the country household suffrage, and claiming that it was part of his "original policy." In 1866, Lord Russell's government resigned, owing to the opposition they encountered from the Tory party and the Adullamites to their Reform Bill. The late Lord Derby formed a Ministry, and Mr. Disraeli became leader of the House of Commons. Now, it must be remarked, that the question of Reform was the one absorbing measure of this time. Several governments had attempted to grapple with it and had been defeated, but Mr. Disraeli was determined, whether defeated or not on his measure of Reform, that it should not exclude him from office. In a speech on the Queen's Address, at the opening of Parliament, Mr. Disraeli announced that the government were going to take the House into their confidence, and for that reason, they intended to proceed by resolution, and as soon as they had discovered what sort of a Reform Bill would be carried, they would embody the principles in a Bill, and lay it before the House. This was a very cunning device to prevent Mr. Disraeli's government from being shipwrecked on this question, for, said he, the government had decided that "Parliamentary Reform should be no longer a question which should decide the fate of Ministries." This method of procedure by resolution did not meet with the approval of the House. Mr. Lowe condemned the attempt of Mr. Disraeli to shift the responsibility of initiation from its proper place on the shoulders of the Government, upon those of the House of Commons. "Why," asked Mr. Lowe, "should the Government be relieved of the liability to be driven from office on the question of Parliamentary Reform, which other governments had always accepted? Why should they have the mark of Cain put on them, so that no man could kill them?" The criticism was too severe for Mr. Disraeli, and, the following evening, he announced the withdrawal of the resolutions; they were accordingly put into the waste paper basket. On March 18th, the curtain again rises, and this star actor announces his bill known as the "Ten Minutes Bill," which was never printed and never discussed. This sort of nonsense was too much for some of Mr. Disraeli's colleagues, and Lords Carnarvon, and Cranbourne, and General Peel resigned office. Lord Cranbourne thus addressed the House of Commons: "A Reform Bill is a very important thing, few more so could come under our discussion, but I venture to think that political morality, and the respect in which public men are held by the people of this country, are of more importance than any provisions even of a Reform Bill. I would for one rather see a very bad Reform Bill passed by the Right Honourable Gentleman, the member for Birmingham, than a Reform Bill inconsistent with all their traditions, with all their preceding action, with all their pro-

fessions, and with all the promises on which they have induced others to vote, passed by my Right Honourable friends upon these benches." Having failed in his first two attempts to deal with the Reform Question, Mr. Disraeli's fertile brain finds a third resource. It must be remembered that Mr. Gladstone's measure had been defeated by a side wind; he had proposed a franchise based upon a *rental* qualification. Lord Dunkellin had moved an amendment to the effect that a *rating* qualification was desirable, Lord Dunkellin's object being to restrict the scope of Mr. Gladstone's measure. Now we shall see how Mr Disraeli twists this decision of the House to suit his own wishes. "He spoke of the House of Commons having, by passing Lord Dunkellin's amendment, supplied an authoritative basis for his proposal of a Ratepaying Household Suffrage measure. A great decision was" he said, "arrived at by the unerring instinct of the House, and henceforth the possession of the franchise was to depend upon the payment of rates." In this Bill he proposed several fancy franchises, with the object of giving wealthy persons two votes. There were many objections to this measure what it appeared to give with one hand, it took away with the other. Personal payment of rates was the condition on which the vote was to be given, and, according to Mr. Gladstone's estimate, these ratepaying conditions, in boroughs under Local Acts, would exclude seven out of every eight householders, and in those under the Small Tenements Acts, four out of every five, while in London the Bill would be inoperative. The aim of the Liberal Party was, therefore, to do away with these restrictions, and on May 17th, Mr. Hodgkinson, the Radical member for Newark, moved a clause, which was tantamount to the entire abolition of the compound householder, and instant enfranchisement of this class of persons, who would have been excluded by the Bill as it originally stood. Mr. Disraeli, to the utter bewilderment of the Tories, accepted this Amendment; clause after clause was then abandoned by him and all his vital points, which he announced when he proposed his measure, he threw overboard. The dual vote, which was intended as a sop to the Conservatives, he himself ridiculed as "the idea of a stray philosopher." Well, indeed, might his old colleague, General Peel, exclaim, "There are three things with respect to which my preceding opinions have been confirmed,—the first is that nothing has so slight a vitality as a vital point; the second is that there is nothing so insecure as securities; and the third, that there is nothing so elastic as the conscience of a Cabinet Minister." Lord Cranbourne said, "I deeply regret to find that the House of Commons has applauded a policy of legerdemain, and I should above all things regret that this great gift to the people, if gift you think it, should have been purchased at the cost of a political betrayal which has no parallel in our Parliamentary annals." To these attacks Mr. Disraeli unblushingly replied, "I do think the Bill embodies the chief principles of the policy we have professed, and which we have always

advocated." This is enough to take one's breath away. Could lying go farther? But throughout his whole life Mr. Disraeli has shown himself a master in this art, if art it can be called. Compare Peel passing a measure for the repeal of the Corn Laws with Disraeli passing a Household Suffrage measure. On the one hand, Peel honestly and frankly admitted his change of opinion, on the other, Mr. Disraeli denied most explicitly that his policy had undergone any change. Yes! it is the old game he played at Taunton. "Here I am, gentlemen, filling the same place, preaching the same doctrine, supporting the same institutions as I did at Wycombe," and so it will be, no doubt, to the end of the chapter.

If further illustrations were required of Mr. Disraeli's political character, I could point out that in a debate during the Crimean War, Lord John Russell charged him with having voted against the admission of Jews into Parliament. Mr. Disraeli denied that he had ever done so, whereupon Mr. Sydney Herbert handed across the table a copy of *Homesurd*, in which the name of B. Disraeli appeared among the "Noes" in a recent division on the question. I could also tell you how warmly he supported the Public Worship Regulation Act, how he described it as a Bill "to stamp out Ritualism," and to suppress "the Mass in Masquerade," and how a short time afterwards he attended a Harvest Thanksgiving Service at Hughenden Church, where there was a Ritualistic Procession of Priests carrying banners, and in the evening, at a meeting, he described what he had seen as the "true Protestant faith, combined with the beauty of holiness."

Lord Beaconsfield's policy in reference to the Eastern Question is too well known to require me to draw your particular attention to it. From first to last I believe he has been anxious to find an excuse for going to war. In November, 1876, he received from the Emperor of Russia a most pacific despatch, and how did he treat it? Not in a spirit of courtesy and conciliation, but with a blast from his war trumpet he declared, that "if the struggle comes, it should be recollected that there is no country so prepared for war as England, because there is no country whose resources are so great. England will not have to enquire whether she can enter into a second or third campaign!"

Was the use of such "rhomontade and balderdash" as this, the way to secure peace between two great powers? These remarks were an answer, not to a menace, or threat from Russia, but to a despatch which concluded with the following words: "His Majesty deeply deplored the distrust of his policy which was manifested in England, and the evil effects it produced, and he earnestly requested me (Lord A. Loftus), to do my utmost to dispel this cloud of suspicion and distrust of Russia, and charged me to convey to Her Majesty's Government the solemn assurances he had repeated to me."

This despatch was only allowed to be published to the English people *three weeks* after its arrival, and the public were deliberately hoodwinked by Lord Beaconsfield making the Czar's pacific

assurances follow instead of precede Lord Derby's suggestions of a Conference.

If we consider his recent explanations of his past relations towards Lords Derby and Carnarvon, we cannot at all be surprised at their mendacious character now that we are acquainted with the past history of the man. Replying to an attack made upon the Ministry by Lord Granville, Lord Beaconsfield said, "Lord Granville knows very well that he has not the slightest evidence to demonstrate that there was any difference between my opinions and those of my colleagues which he has quoted with approbation and sympathy. I say that from the very first there has been no hesitation on the part of Her Majesty's Government as to the course of policy which they should pursue with regard to those great occurrences which are taking place in Eastern Europe." Those words were uttered on the 17th of January, and on the 18th (the day following), Lord Carnarvon said: "I have been led to consider carefully the events of the last few weeks, and the divergences of opinion then unfortunately developing themselves amongst us, and I cannot conceal from myself that these difficulties have been very considerable on a question which it is of the utmost importance to the country that the Government should be one and undivided." Lord Derby on April 8th, said: "My Lords, I must with all deference, dissent from the appeal which my noble friend addressed to me when he said, 'How can you doubt the policy of this measure—the calling out of the Reserves—when you assented to the early calling together of Parliament, and to the vote of £6,000,000 which were only part of the same policy?' My noble friend knows that I did not very willingly acquiesce in the early summoning of Parliament, and that the date ultimately fixed was a compromise on a proposition that Parliament should meet even earlier than it did. My noble friend is also aware that I expressed grave doubts as to the necessity for this vote of £6,000,000. If I am to make a clean breast of it, I will state that upon that question I temporarily retired from the Cabinet. My resignation was in my noble friend's hands for a period of 48 hours." (I take these quotations from the *Times*.)

Here we have Lords Carnarvon and Derby saying one thing, and Lord Beaconsfield saying another. Who is to be believed? Judging from his past career, certainly Lord Beaconsfield is not worthy of confidence. Yet this is the man into whose hands are committed the interests of this great nation.

He is the pet of the aristocracy, he is the idol of the Music-hall cad, and the saint of the residuum. What his ambition may lead him to we know not. He has told us the "unlikely always happens." His two ablest and most distinguished colleagues, have washed their hands of him, and his policy. Others, as honest, but less courageous, may follow. "It is time" as the *Daily News* says, "that the country

should make up its mind, whether it will, or will not, follow Lord Beaconsfield into war. For nothing can now be more certain than that he will plunge us into war if he can. That strange, successful, fantastic, theatrical career would be fittingly completed perhaps, by the final blaze of a great historical war."

I have surely recited enough of cases for you to form an opinion as to whether the "Righteousness which exalteth a nation" has been manifested in the political life and character of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield. Our Tory friends prate about a "National recognition of Christianity," and the Earl of Beaconsfield has taught them the phrase. Beaconsfield and a national recognition of Christianity! What nonsense all this is. Surely absurdity could not further go.

Lord Beaconsfield's character is easily described—He is a man of brilliant ability and wonderful resource, a consummate master of sarcasm and repartee, of sparkling wit, and as a chief, clever and ever watchful, but

"A wit's a feather, and a chief's a rod.

An honest man's the noblest work of God."

He is a man full of vanity and ambition, which, one of the writers in Blackwood's Magazine has said, "may possibly lead him one day to proclaim himself as the long promised Messiah to the Jews." The one achievement of practical statesmanship, viz., the passing of the Reform Bill of 1867, which has placed him at the helm of public affairs, was accomplished by his complete reversal of every Tory maxim, the tricking of his opponents by outbidding them in his offers, and the betrayal of his own party. The old-fashioned Toryism of Eldon, of General Peel, however much we may disagree with it, we are bound to respect, but this modern stuff which has taken the place of Toryism, and goes by the name of Constitutionalism, or, I should prefer to call it, Disraelism, is a mean and contemptible article, founded solely on expediency, and destitute of truth, honour and principle. We were told that there was "a lying spirit abroad," and so there has been since Benjamin Disraeli was returned for Maidstone. The character of a statesman should be like the character of Caesar's wife, above suspicion. Mr. Löwe says, "the virtue of a woman, the valour of a soldier, and the integrity of a statesman, are indispensable qualities." How humiliated ought we to feel, that at this moment, when the nation may be on the eve of war, the voice of Beaconsfield should speak for England. Let us hope the day is not far distant, when the nation shall return to her old love, and that William Ewart Gladstone, "true in word and tried in deed," shall once more direct her councils.











